

SOME NEW TRANSLATIONS OF DE SOTO DOCUMENTS
FROM THE GENERAL ARCHIVE OF THE INDIES,
SEVILLE

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Introduction

The documents presented here reflect several stages of Hernando de Soto's long American trajectory.* Appearing in chronological order as they were issued, the first of the collection relates his passage through Peru, where he had participated in the conquest under the command of Francisco Pizarro, also an Extremaduran. His active collaboration and leadership in some of the most important episodes of the Peruvian conquest, along with his proven loyalty, induced Pizarro to name him *Teniente de Gobernador* [lieutenant governor] of the city of Cuzco, the capital of the Incan empire. The post qualified him as supreme authority of the city surpassed only by Francisco Pizarro.

The naming [*nombamiento*] appears dated July 27, 1534, eight months after the Spaniards entered that city; it was issued in the nearby settlement of Jauja and signed by the governor. Instructions are included in the document for carrying out the post, specifying his obligations. As lieutenant governor of Cuzco, Hernando de Soto had the power to intervene in matters of jus-

*Included are: 1) a document naming De Soto as lieutenant governor of Cuzco [Archivo General de Indias, Seville (AGI). *Patronato*. Legajo 90-A]; 2) a Cédula Real from 1537 authorizing certain other ships bound for the Indies to accompany De Soto [AGI. *Indiferente General*. Legajo 1962, Folios 301 vto.-302]; 3) a Cédula Real from 1538 authorizing the same ships to leave by March 15 if De Soto was not ready (which he was not) [AGI. *Indiferente General*. Legajo 1962, Folio 331 vto.]; 4) authorization for Doña Isabel to bring three women slaves to Cuba in her personal service [AGI. *Indiferente General*. Legajo 1962, Folio 331]; 5) a lengthy interrogation for De Soto's admission to the Order of Santiago [Archivo Histórico Nacional. *Sección Ordenes Militares (Santiago)*. Expediente No. 7855]; 6) a document in which De Soto granted wide authority to his wife to represent him in administering all his assets and properties [AGI. *Justicia*. Legajo 750 (A)]; and 7) an inventory of De Soto's assets drawn up by Isabel de Bobadilla after learning of her husband's death [AGI. *Justicia*. Legajo 750 (A)].

Spanish transcriptions of documents 5 and 6 have appeared before in Antonio del Solar y Taboada and José de Rújula y de Ochotorena, *El Adelantado Hernando de Soto* (Badajoz, Spain: Ediciones Arqueros, 1929).

tice, whether they be civil or criminal cases, and his authority extended to the Spanish population (residents or transients), as well as to the native population. Outside his jurisdiction were the defense of the city and conflicts brought about by indigenous uprisings. It is seen from this document that during this period Cuzco enjoyed ordinances that regulated municipal life not unlike those that also existed in Spain. In the instructions, for example, was the recommendation to Spaniards who had been awarded *repartimientos* and *encomiendas* of Indians not to commit abuses with their charges. This circumstance was entrusted to the care of De Soto, who was admonished to watch over the indigenous population and their treatment; he was also encouraged to begin the work of indoctrination and preaching of the Catholic faith among them.

For barely two years De Soto held the post of lieutenant governor. In 1536, he returned to Spain and obtained the royal authorization to begin preparations for the expedition to Florida. Related to these preparations are two royal *cédulas* issued in Valladolid on December 7, 1537, and February 25, 1538, respectively.

When the first of these *cédulas* was granted, all of the preparations had concluded for the expedition that De Soto would direct toward what is now the southeastern United States, the fleet and participants having joined together in San Lúcar de Barrameda. Through this document authorization was granted to the ships that were preparing to depart for the Indies in the company of the armada of the *adelantado*. With this concession the crown put into practice one of the means adopted in 1521 for the navigation of the Atlantic: the organization of convoys protected by warships to eliminate the dangers posed by pirates and corsairs and to safeguard the shipment of precious metals. Given the size of the armada that, under De Soto's command, was prepared to depart, and the material means within his reach, military protection was ensured.

The second of the *cédulas* issued from Valladolid is couched in terms similar to the first. Due to the delay of the expedition's departure, the crown again recommended that the ships preparing to depart for the Indies wait until March 15 so as to be able to travel under the guard of De Soto's armada, though it did grant the freedom to depart after that date even if De Soto's ships might not have left, which is essentially what happened. The expedition to La Florida would begin its navigation some days later on April 6.

In addition to the *cédulas*, we have included a document that is not directly related to Hernando de Soto but to his wife, Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, whom he married in 1536. It deals with a license that allowed her to bring

along three women slaves for her personal service. The circumstance that these three slaves were white suggests with a high degree of probability that they were Moors. The reference in the document with respect to their having proved their Christian quality before their twelfth birthdays points equally in this direction.

Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, upon requesting a license for her slaves, was obeying the law of the time regarding the passage of slaves to the Indies. She was respecting the disposition that prohibited the passage of slaves without express consent of the king. Had she not done so, Doña Isabel would have incurred a penalty of one thousand pesos of gold, the fine levied against those who disobeyed.

Deposited in the Archivo Histórico Nacional of Madrid [National Historical Archives] is the proceeding leading to the concession to Hernando de Soto of the "*hábito e insignia*" [habit and insignia] of the Order of Santiago. In this proceeding are included the investigations that were brought about to prove that De Soto met the necessary requirements to make him worthy of such a distinction.

The basic requirement to accede to the habit and to be named *caballero* [knight] of the order consisted above all in demonstrating the quality of the individual, his condition of nobility [*hidalgúia*] as well as that of his ancestors, and also his pure blood [*limpieza de sangre*]. The latter would be the central point around which revolved questions that the priest of Lobón—a village situated quite near the road between Mérida and Badajoz—asked various residents of the city, finally completing the charge with which the emperor had entrusted him. More than as king, the intervention of Charles V in this matter was motivated by his condition as "perpetual administrator" of the Order of Santiago.

The beginning of the proceeding had as a prelude—as the king indicated—the express petition of De Soto to enter the order as a *caballero*. De Soto's interest to rise to such a grade corresponds perfectly to the aspirations and wishes of that epoch to ascend the social ladder. The amount of money it would cost him should his request be found favorable mattered little to De Soto, in light of the distinction, prestige, and honorific relevance that he could obtain with this designation, given that there were many *hidalgos* in sixteenth-century Spain, while the number of people who could be presented as *caballeros* was somewhat lower. In any case, once such a distinction was obtained the aspirations of the Extremaduran would not end there. It is probable that De Soto envisioned the possibility of acceding to a domain [*señorío*] with a title—such as when Hernán Cortés was named Marqués del

Valle—if La Florida was revealed as a second Peru or Mexico and he managed to come out successful and triumphant.

Returning to the document, it contains the declarations that the cleric Juan Mexía took from nine people about a week after De Soto had set sail from San Lúcar de Barrameda. The witnesses are all mature, almost senile individuals: the youngest is more than forty years old, four are sexagenarians, and the oldest—Hernando Romo “el Viejo”—brings honor to his nickname and is said to be seventy years old. The profession and quality of the group are not explicit, but in accordance with the recommendation of the emperor to the priest, the latter was to search out testimony of people of “good fame and conscience.” It only makes clear to us that one of them bragged about having the post of regidor and that another had obtained the degree of bachelor of law from the University of Salamanca. The fact that all, with one exception, signed the declaration with their own hands does not lead us anywhere, given that from such a circumstance it cannot be inferred with certainty who had control of the writing.

In spite of what might be supposed, in the testimonies contained in the interrogation little light is cast that might resolve the polemic surrounding De Soto’s birthplace, even though he and his family, based on the declarations of the witnesses, are closely associated with Badajoz and Jerez; the third Extremaduran site in question is not mentioned at all—Villanueva de Barcarrota, the location indicated by Garcilaso de la Vega in his chronicle, *La Florida*, as the adelantado’s birthplace.

In San Cristóbal de la Habana, moments before his departure for the Florida coast, Hernando de Soto endorsed a document granting wide authority to his wife Doña Isabel de Bobadilla. This document appears dated May 17, 1539, and through it Isabel was converted into the maximum representative of Hernando de Soto during his absence. The adelantado authorized his wife to administer all of his assets and properties in the kingdoms of Castille as well as on the island and Tierra Firme. Isabel de Bobadilla could henceforth collect and receive all money pertaining to the conquistador, rule and administer his Indians, carry out in his name contracts and companies, sell and pawn his assets, and represent him in civil and criminal cases. The adelantado also authorized his wife to send the support ships and necessary supplies to continue the conquest of La Florida.

This collection of documents closes with the inventory of assets drawn up by Isabel de Bobadilla after learning of her husband’s death. Although the news had been sent through an official channel by means of a dispatch from the viceroy of New Spain, Isabel already knew of the details of the failed

expedition and of the death of the adelantado from other people "who escaped and left La Florida."

The inventory, carried out on December 6, 1543, covers all of the assets—furniture, land, and livestock—that the couple possessed on the island to that moment, leaving aside the property in Castille and in other parts of the New World.

I

NAMING OF CAPTAIN HERNANDO DE SOTO AS LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF CUZCO, 1534.

What you, Captain Hernando de Soto, must do to fulfill the post of lieutenant governor of the city of Cuzco is as follows: Firstly, the things regarding the settlement of lawsuits, demands, denunciations, quarrels, and debates, and other civil and criminal matters that might occur among the Spanish, residents, and other persons in said city in all matters, as well as the matters that they as well as the natives under their control are subject to and other [matters] that require judgment, attention, and decrees through decisions. You will have your post without being involved in, nor being accustomed to, nor being aware of, anything involving the protection of said city, the pacification of the natives, or of war, should it occur, because I have provided for this, and I will provide the person who will be in charge of this as is contained in the instruction and provision that will be given.

ITEM: Because I left in place certain ordinances in said city of Cuzco and I am informed that some people have gone against them, you will secretly communicate which ones and who have broken them or have done anything other than what I left ordered, such as requesting and receiving gold, as well as other things, and how and in what way it is heard or done, you will send it to me so that I may see it and do what is right.

ITEM: If through such information you find that one or more have received gold or silver, you will determine and learn if it has been from their *caciques*, and if they have harassed them for it, and if they received it in the presence of a supervisor [*veedor*] and in the prescribed manner, and if they discovered it or brought it from another area. Having seen this, you will truthfully advise me, and above all you will

send for and keep said gold and silver until you hear from me what will be well to do with it.

- ITEM: Because Juan de Quincoçes has gone to said city on business related to the service of His Majesty, as you know and will see, you will give him all of the favors and help in such a way as to be carried out by my command, not impeding what has been said and stated above in this instruction.
- ITEM: You will protect and carry out the ordinances that I left in place in said city, preventing anyone to take gold from his cacique or from anywhere else, or from harassing his Indians and caciques and from telling them to extract a lot of gold from the mines, or in asking or making them do more than what is necessary for their well being.
- ITEM: You will have the responsibility and care to see that the Indians be well treated, not allowing that any harm or vexation be done to them by the Spaniards whose charge they may be in or by anyone else. You will especially see to it that they be indoctrinated and taught in the things of our Catholic faith, and you will let me know what might be needed to provide for their well being and for the maintenance and good governance of said city, taking special care with this matter.

It will be advisable to carry out all of the above and all related matters found in this instruction, and I trust that you will fulfill and resolve [such matters] with diligence and care as you see fit, deserving of service to His Majesty and the good governance of the republic of said city. Issued in the city of Jauja on the twenty-seventh day of the month of July, 1534. Francisco Pizarro. [AGI. *Patronato*. Legajo 90-A.]

2.

CÉDULA REAL PERMITTING THE SHIPS GOING TO THE
INDIES TO GO IN THE COMPANY OF DE SOTO'S
ARMADA, 1537.

Our officials, you who reside in the city of Seville in the Casa de Contratación of the Indies, on behalf of the adelantado Hernando de Soto, our governor and captain general of the province of Florida, it has come to my

attention that he is ready to set sail on the January winds [*brisas de Henero*], because before now no ship has been able to enter the sea, and I have been requested to order that when he departs from the bar of San Lúcar all of the ships ready to go to our Indies go in his company, since traveling in the company of his armada they will go more safely protected from French corsairs, or as my wish might be. I took the above to be reasonable. Thus I command you to grant that said adelantado go as captain of the ships setting sail to continue their trip to our Indies at the time that he departs with his armada. Issued in Valladolid on the seventh day of the month of December, 1537. I the king. [AGI. *Indiferente General*. Legajo 1962, Folios 301 vto.-302.]

3.

CÉDULA REAL REQUIRING THE SHIPS GOING TOWARD
THE INDIES TO DO SO IN THE COMPANY OF HERNANDO
DE SOTO, 1538.

To those of their Majesties' Royal Council of the Indies, we order on behalf of the Crown that you, the officials who reside in the city of Seville in the Casa de Contratación of the Indies, that upon receiving this you notify the captains and masters and other seamen on that river [Guadalquivir?] or in the port of San Lúcar or in Cádiz that they wait until the fifteenth day of March of the present year and not leave without De Soto's armada. If Don Hernando has not set sail by the stipulated date, they may go whenever they wish, because this is suitable to His Majesty's service and the well being of his subjects. Issued in Valladolid on the twenty-fifth of February, 1538. Signed by the count and Beltrán Carvajal and Bernal Gutierre Velázquez. [AGI. *Indiferente General*. Legajo 1962, Folio 331 vto.]

4.

AUTHORIZATION FOR DOÑA ISABEL DE BOBADILLA TO
BRING THREE SLAVE WOMEN TO THE ISLAND OF CUBA
FOR HER SERVICE, 1538.

Our officials, you who reside in the city of Seville in the Casa de Contratación of the Indies, Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, wife of the adelantado Don

Hernando de Soto, our governor and captain general of the province of Florida, it has been communicated to me that she has three white slaves who are good Christians and women of good life and reputation whom she would like to bring with her to the island of Cuba to serve her and her household, and she has asked that I give her permission for this. Therefore, I order you to find out who these slaves are and to verify that they were Christians before they had turned twelve years old and that they are servants of said Doña Isabel. And allow them to travel with her to the island of Cuba without imposing upon her any impediment, having first paid Diego de la Haya, *cambio* [broker, purser, accountant] of our court, two ducats for the license of each one, inasmuch as it is his duty to collect this amount. Issued in the town of Valladolid on the sixteenth day of the month of February, 1538. I the Queen. [AGI. *Indiferente General*. Legajo 1962, Folio 331.]

5.

INTERROGATION FOR THE CONCESSION OF THE HABIT
OF SANTIAGO TO HERNANDO DE SOTO, 1538

(transcription of Antonio del Solar
and José de Rújula).

Don Charles, by divine clemency Emperor *semper augusto*, king of Germany, Castille, León, Aragón, of the two Sicilies, of Jerusalem, Navarre, Granada, Toledo, Valencia, Galicia, Mallorca, Seville, Cerdeña, Córdoba, Córcega, Murcia, Jaén, of los Algarves, Algezira, Gibraltar, the Canary Islands, the Indies, islands and Terra Firme of the ocean, Count of Barcelona, Lord of Vizcaya and Molina, Duke of Athens and Neopatria, Count of Flanders and Tyrol, etc., perpetual administrator of the order and knight-hood of Santiago by apostolic authority, to you Juan Mexía, priest of Lobón, friar of said order, health and grace. May you know that on behalf of the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto it was communicated to me that his purpose and will is to be in said order and to live in observance and under the rule and discipline of it, out of devotion that he has for the daring apostle Santiago, beseeching me to order that he be given the habit and insignia of said order, or as my wish might be. And because the person who is to be received into said order and be given its habit and insignia must be a noble [*hijodalgo*], according to traditional Spanish law and custom, and provided

that he possess the qualities that the statutes of said order require, it was resolved in my council that I should send you this letter concerning said information, and I, trusting that you are an individual who will work to my benefit and who will faithfully and efficiently carry out what I have ordered and entrusted unto you, I considered it to be good. And through this letter I entrust unto you and order as is required [in the letter] you to go to the city of Badajoz, where it is said that the aforementioned adelantado Don Hernando de Soto was born, and that you receive through your office [*oficio*] any witnesses that you deem to be necessary, that they be people of good reputation and conscience, that they know the adelantado and his lineage, and that you ask him the questions contained in the interrogatory that you will be given with this letter, signed by Francisco Guerrero, secretary of my Council. And to the witness who answers the question, ask him how he knows, and if he believes it, how and why he believes it. And if they saw or heard tell something, let them say from whom and how, and how long ago, in such a way as to give a certain explanation to their statements and depositions. And send to my Council what these witnesses say and attest to, signed with your name, closed and sealed, so that I may see it and decide what has to be decided concerning it. I give you power to carry this out with its incidences and dependences, appurtenances and rights, and it must be carried out in the prescribed manner, subject to my grace, for twenty ducats of gold for pious works. Issued in the town of Valladolid, the twenty-eighth of March, 1538.

Count Don Garía Manrique, Licentiate Luxán, Licentiate Sarmiento, Doctor Anaya. I, Francisco Guerrero, chamber scribe of his imperial and Catholic Highness, had this written by his command in accord with those of his Council of the Orders.

The questions that are to be asked the witnesses who are to be received through the office regarding the habit of Santiago requested by Don Hernando de Soto are those herein contained. Above all, these witnesses must be assured that what they attest to will be known only to the gentlemen of the Council and no one else, that there will be no record of their statements, that it will not be brought before a scribe in the place where they live, that it will be brought only to the Council, and that it will not be made known outside the proceedings, as it is told. Having thus assured the said witnesses and first receiving from them a legal oath, ask them the following questions:

Firstly, if they know the aforementioned Don Hernando de Soto, where

he was born, and whose son he is. And if they know his father and mother, and what their names are. And where they live, and if they know or knew De Soto's grandparents on both his mother's and father's side. And what their names were, where they lived and were born, and if the witnesses are related to any of them.

- ITEM: If they know, believe, saw, or heard tell that the father of the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto and the father and mother of said father, naming each and every one of them, have been and are currently and generally reputed to be people of nobility [*hijosdalgo*], according to traditional Spanish law and custom, and that they have not been touched by the race of Jews, converts, Moors, or peasants.
- ITEM: If they know, etc., that the mother of the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto and the father and mother of said mother, naming each and every one of them, have been and are currently reputed to be old Christians [*cristianos viejos*], without being touched by the race of Jews, converts, or Moors, as it is said.
- ITEM: If they know, etc., that adelantado Don Hernando de Soto has a horse.
- ITEM: If they know, etc., if adelantado Don Hernando de Soto has been challenged, and if the witnesses say that he has been challenged, may they declare how he overcame the challenge.

Francisco Guerrero.

In the town of Lobón, which is in the jurisdiction of the lord Santiago, on April 12 in the year of our Savior Jesus Christ, 1538, I, Juan Mexía, priest of the aforementioned town of Lobón, received a closed and sealed package of papers that Francisco Guerrero, secretary of the Council of the Orders, sent me through the mail, in which came a provision from the Emperor and King, our Lord, perpetual administrator of the order of Santiago, issued in the aforementioned Council and countersigned by the said secretary and sealed with His Majesty's seal, by means of which I am ordered to receive through my office the witnesses I determine to be necessary in order to know if the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto has the qualities that he should have for him to be given the habit of said order as is contained in said provision. And in this package came an interrogatory signed by the aforementioned Francisco Guerrero, with which I have to question and examine the witnesses; the provision and interrogatory are attached herein. And thus

having received the aforementioned package with the said dispatch and with a letter that the secretary wrote to me on behalf of the gentlemen of the Council, so that through my office I secretly obtained this information from people of good reputation and conscience, that I not go before any scribe, that there be no record of any of it, that I get a clerk with no suspicion to do it, and that I send it closed and sealed to the Council signed by me and by those witnesses who can sign. And thus I, Juan Mexía, priest, with all humility and reverence, obeyed and accepted this provision and commission of His Majesty in fulfillment of what is contained within. I went to the city of Badajoz, and as discreetly and secretly as I could, I searched out and found people from whom the truth could be known, who were not indebted or unreliable regarding the information, which through my office I secretly did in the following way:

In the city of Badajoz, on the thirteenth day of April of the present year, I, Juan Mexía, priest, took and received legal oath from Hernando de León, resident of Badajoz; I read the provision and interrogatory to him, I attested to him what the opening part [of the interrogatory] contains, and I charged him under the obligation of his oath that he tell and clarify the truth about what he knew and about what he may be asked by me regarding the interrogatory. The oath executed, what he said and attested to is the following:

Being asked the first question, he said that he was more or less sixty years old, that he is not indebted to or related to anyone referred to in the first question. He said that he knows the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto, and that he knew the adelantado's father and mother, whose names were Francisco Méndez, his father, and Leonor Arias, his mother. He knew them to live in this city of Badajoz and in the city of Jerez. He also knew the adelantado to be in these cities in his parents' house. This witness did not know the father and mother of the adelantado's father, but he heard them say that they were natives of Jerez, but he did not know their names, and this is what he knows of this question.

This witness said that he knew the father and mother of the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto's mother, and their name was Hernando Gutiérrez and Cardenosa. He knew them to be residents of this city of Badajoz for a long time, because they were neighbors of this witness and he had dealings and conversed with them every day.

To the second [question], this witness said that he knew the father of the adelantado who was named Francisco Méndez to live in this city of Badajoz and in the city of Jerez, and that he was regarded in these two cities as

hidalgo and hijodalgo and was generally regarded as such until he died. And this witness knows that he was untouched by the race of Jews, Moors, or peasants, but rather having been regarded as hijodalgo, and as such was regarded, as has been said. And as for his parents, as already stated, he did not know them, except to hear that they were hidalgos.

To the third [question], this witness said that he knew adelantado Don Hernando de Soto's mother, and the father and mother of his mother, as has been stated, that his mother's name was Leonor Arias Cardenosa, and the father and mother of the adelantado's mother were named Hernán Gutiérrez, and the mother and grandmother of the adelantado were named Cardenosa. And this witness knows that they are old Christians and hidalgos and were regarded as such for as long as they lived in this city of Badajoz, and thus they are taken to be hijosdalgos, and that they are untouched by the race of Jews, Moors, or peasants. They were generally regarded as such in this city because they were neighbors of this witness.

To the fourth [question], this witness said that he knows that the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto has a horse because he has seen it, and his father and grandfather had one, and therefore it is the truth.

To the fifth [question], this witness said that he does not know anything, nor does he know anymore about this case, to which he swore an oath.

Hernando de León was sworn by me, Juan Mexía, priest, to secrecy, that he not ever say or reveal anything to anyone, under penalty of perjury, to which he promised and signed his name. Hernando de León.

In this city of Badajoz on the aforementioned day, month, and year, I, Juan Mexía, priest, received through my office the oath of Suero Vázquez de Moscoso, resident and regidor of the city of Badajoz. I read to him the provision and interrogatory, I attested to him what the opening part [of the interrogatory] contains, and I charged him that under said oath he tell and declare the truth about what he knew and about what he may be asked by me regarding the interrogatory. The oath executed, he said and attested to the following:

Being asked about the tenor of the first question from the interrogatory, he said that he knows the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto, and knows that he is a native of the city of Jerez, and knows that he is the son of Francisco Méndez and Leonor Arias Tinoca, and knows that said Francisco Méndez was a resident of the city of Jerez, and that said Leonor Arias was a native of this city of Badajoz. He did not know the father and mother of the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto's father but had heard of them. He knew

Hernán Gutiérrez and Juana González, father and mother of the adelantado's mother, and that they were residents of this city of Badajoz, whom he knew by sight, by dealings, and by conversation. And this witness is not a relative of any of them and is more or less fifty-three years old.

To the second, this witness said that he knew, as is already stated, the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto's parents. They were named, as is stated, Francisco Méndez and Leonor Arias Tinoca, and he knew them to be hijosdalgo, as the question declares, and were generally regarded as such in this city of Badajoz. And this witness knows that they were untouched by the race of the Jews, converts, Moors, or peasants, but rather they and their descendants were regarded as hijosdalgo.

To the third, this witness said that he knew the father and mother of the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto's mother. The father was named Hernán Gutiérrez Cardenosa and the other, Juana González Tinoca, grandparents of the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto. He knew them to be hijosdalgo and were generally regarded as such in this city of Badajoz and throughout this land. They were untouched by the race of Jews, converts, Moors, and peasants, but rather were regarded as hijosdalgo and as old Christians and are thus regarded, and this is the truth because this witness knows it.

To the fourth, this witness said that he knows that Don Hernando de Soto has a horse and horses, because this witness has seen them.

To the fifth, he said that he knows no more of this case, to which he swore an oath. He was charged with secrecy, as with the first witness, and he signed his name here. Suero Vázquez de Moscoso.

In said city of Badajoz, the fourteenth day of April, 1538, I, Juan Mexía, priest, received through my office the oath of Hernando Morales, resident of the city of Badajoz, to whom I read the aforementioned provision and interrogatory, and I attested to him what the opening part [of the interrogatory] contains, and I charged him that under said oath he tell and clarify the truth about what he knew and about what he may be asked by me regarding the interrogatory. The oath executed, he said and attested to the following:

Being asked about the tenor of the first question, he said he knows the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto, that he knew his father, who was named Francisco Méndez, he knew the adelantado's mother who is named Leonor Arias Tinoca, that he knew them in the city of Jerez and in this city of Badajoz, and he also knew the adelantado in his parents' house. And this witness did not know the father and mother of the adelantado's father but

had heard of them. He knew the father and mother of the adelantado's mother, who were named Hernán Gutiérrez Cardenosa and she was Tinoca, not remembering her other name. He knew them to be residents of this city of Badajoz because he had dealings and conversation with them. He is probably forty-five years old and is not indebted to or related to anyone in the above question.

To the second, this witness said that he knew Francisco Méndez, father of the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto, in this city of Badajoz and in the city of Jerez. He knew him as an hijodalgo and had been regarded as such in these cities. And his descendants are regarded as hijodalgo. And this witness knows that he is untouched by the race of Jews, converts, Moors, or peasants, but rather considered to be a very good hidalgo and hijodalgo. He did not know his parents, but this witness heard from his own parents and many other older men that they were very noble hidalgos and were regarded as such in this land, and this he knows.

To the third, this witness said that he knew, as has been stated, Leonor Arias, mother of the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto, and Hernán Gutiérrez and Fulana [so-and-so] Tinoca, his grandparents, father and mother of the adelantado's mother. And he knew them in this city of Badajoz to be hijodalgo, and they were commonly reputed to be such hijodalgo in this city of Badajoz and throughout this region, and regarded as old Christians. And they were untouched by the race of Jews, converts, Moors, or peasants and were untouched by any of the flaws referred to in the question, but rather were regarded, as has been said, as hijodalgo and old Christians, and this is the truth.

To the fourth, this witness said that the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto has a horse and horses, because this witness has seen them.

To the fifth, he said that he does not know the content of the question, nor anything about it. He was charged with secrecy, as with the first witness, who promised it under the charge of said oath, and he signed it with his name. Hernando Morales.

In the city of Badajoz, on the fourteenth day of the current month and year, I, Juan Mexía, priest, through my office received in legal manner the oath of Alvaro Romo, resident of the city of Badajoz, to whom I read the provision and interrogatory, and I attested to him what the opening part [of the interrogatory] contains, and I charged him that under said oath he tell and clarify the truth about what he knew and about what he may be asked

by me regarding the interrogatory. The oath executed, he said and attested to the following:

Being asked the first question, he said that he knows the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto and knew Francisco Méndez, his father, who was a native of the city of Jerez, and he also knew the adelantado's mother, who was named Leonor Arias, who was a native of this city of Badajoz. He knew them to live in Jerez after they got married, and there he knew the adelantado in the house of his parents. He did not know the adelantado's grandparents on his father's side but had heard tell of them. He knew Hernán Gutiérrez Cardenosa and Hernán Gutiérrez's wife, the father and mother of the mother of the adelantado, his grandparents. And he knew them to live in this city of Badajoz until they died here. This witness is approximately fifty-five years old, more or less, and is neither indebted to nor relative of anyone referred to in this question.

To the second, this witness said that he knew, as has been said, Francisco Méndez, father of the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto, in the city of Jerez and in this city of Badajoz. He knew him as hijodalgo according to traditional Spanish law, and this witness regarded him as such for as long as he lived. He did not know his parents, as has been stated, other than to hear tell that they were hijosdalgo, and he heard this publicly in these two cities. And this witness knows that he was untouched by the race of Jews, converts, Moors, or peasants, having been regarded as stated, as hijodalgo, and this is the truth.

To the third, this witness said that he knew Leonor Arias, the adelantado's mother, and that he knew Hernán Gutiérrez Cardenosa and his wife, whose name he does not remember, who are the parents of the adelantado's mother, his grandparents. He knew that they lived in this city of Badajoz, and that they and their descendants were generally regarded as hijosdalgo, because this witness has seen a judgment of nobility [*sentencia de hidalguía*] that other children and grandchildren of Hernán Gutiérrez have. They are regarded as hijosdalgo in said city. They are untouched by the race of the Jews, converts, Moors, or peasants, rather regarded as hijosdalgo and old Christians, and as such this witness has regarded them. Thus it is the truth to which he swore an oath.

To the fourth, he said that Don Hernando de Soto has a horse and horses, and this witness knows because he has seen them, and thus it is true.

To the fifth, this witness said that he does not know, nor does he know any more about this case. To the oath that he made, he was sworn to secrecy,

as with the first witness, and he promised it under the charge of said oath. And he signed it with his name. Alvaro Romo.

In the city of Badajoz, on this day of the current month and year, the fourteenth of April, I, Juan Mexía, priest, through my office received in a legal manner the oath of Hernando Romo, the elder, resident of the city of Badajoz, to whom I read the provision and interrogatory, and I attested to him what the opening part [of the interrogatory] contains, and I charged him that under said oath he tell and clarify the truth about what he knew and what may be asked by me regarding the interrogatory. The oath executed, he said and attested to the following:

Being asked about the tenor of the first question, he said that he knows the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto from sight, from dealings, and from conversation. He knew Francisco Méndez, the adelantado's father, and knew Leonor Arias Tinoca, mother of the adelantado. And that Francisco Méndez was a native of Jerez de Badajoz, and that his wife, mother of the adelantado, was a native of this city of Badajoz. He did not know the father and mother of the father of the adelantado, the adelantado's grandparents, other than to hear tell of them. He knew Hernán Gutiérrez Cardenosa, and the wife of said Cardenosa, whose name he does not remember, but dealt and conversed with them because they were neighbors of this witness. They were the father and mother of Leonor Arias, mother of the adelantado, and grandparents of the adelantado, and were regarded as such in this city of Badajoz where they lived. He is seventy years old, more or less, and he is neither indebted to nor related to anyone referred to in said question.

To the second, this witness said that he knew, as has been stated, Francisco Méndez, the father of adelantado Don Hernando de Soto, and he saw him marry in this city of Badajoz Leonor Arias, his wife. And he was generally regarded as hijodalgo in this city and throughout this land, and as hidalgo and hijodalgo he was generally regarded. He heard publicly stated in this city that Francisco Mendez's parents were very good hidalgos. This witness knows that he had no trace of the race of Jews, converts, Moors, or peasants, but rather was hidalgo, as has been stated, because this witness dealt with and conversed with him many times and many days, because he was his neighbor, and this is the truth.

To the third, this witness said that he knew, as has been stated, Leonor Arias, mother of the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto, and he knew Hernán Gutiérrez Cardenosa, and said Cardenosa's wife, whose name he does not remember, who are the parents of Leonor Arias, and grandparents of the

adelantado. They lived in this city of Badajoz until they departed from this life. This witness knows that they were hidalgos and hijosdalgo according to traditional Spanish law, and they were generally regarded as hijosdalgo in this city of Badajoz and in this land, and this witness regarded them accordingly. And he knows that their descendants are considered to be hijosdalgo, untouched by the race of Jews, converts, Moors, or peasants, but rather hidalgos, old Christians, and very noble, and this is true.

To the fourth, this witness said that he knows that the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto has a horse and horses, and this witness knows this because he has seen them.

To the fifth, he said that he does not know the content of the question or anything else about this case to which he swore an oath. He was charged with secrecy as with the first witness, and he promised it under the charge of the oath that he made and signed it with his name. Hernando Romo.

In the city of Badajoz on this day of the aforementioned month and year, I, Juan Mexía, priest, took and received in a legal manner an oath from Alonso González, resident of the city of Badajoz. I read to him the said provision and testimony, and I attested to him what the opening part [of the interrogatory] contains, and I charged him under the obligation of his oath that he tell and clarify the truth about what he knew and about what he might be asked by me regarding the interrogatory. The oath executed, he said and attested to the following:

Being asked the first question, he said that he knows the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto from sight, from dealings, and from conversation, and he knew Francisco Méndez and Leonor Arias Tinoca, his wife, parents of the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto. And the father was a native of the city of Jerez, near Badajoz, and he knew them to live in both of these two cities, but he did not know the father and mother of Francisco Méndez, grandparents of the adelantado, but had heard tell of them. And this witness knew Hernán Gutiérrez Cardenosa and his wife, whose name he does not remember, father and mother of Leonor Arias, mother of the adelantado and his grandparents. These were residents and natives of this city of Badajoz and were there until they died, and this is the truth, because he knew them and dealt and conversed with them.

He said that he is sixty years old, more or less, and that he is neither indebted to nor related to anyone referred to in this question.

To the second, this witness said that he knew, as has been stated, Francisco Méndez, father of the adelantado Don Hernando de Soto, to live in